

promises and truthfulness and is expressed in hospitality. Our promises are rooted in God's fidelity to us and our truthfulness finds its home in the grace and truth of Christ. (13)

Pohl explains that behind her text there is the collective wisdom of a group of twelve pastors, three leaders of intentional communities and three professors that have met together since 2002 for three days, twice a year. A generous grant from the Lilly Foundation through the initiative "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence" made that process possible. It is evident in the text that this interaction brought a wealth of biblical insight, theological savvy, pastoral wisdom, as well as case studies that contributed to this final work that is both challenging and edifying.

As I write this review in Spain, where there is a growing post-Christendom atmosphere, in spite of the visible presence of Catholic popular religiosity, there is a growing concern for the need of a revival of virtues as the only way to keep society from falling apart. Christine Pohl's work is the type of answer at which Christians should be working everywhere.

African Christianity Rising: Christianity's Explosive Growth in Africa

By James Ault

Northampton, MA: James Ault Productions, 2013, DVD, \$29.99

Reviewed by: David E. Fenrick

When I was a student in graduate school, I had the joy of studying in Zimbabwe. While there I lived with a family in an all-black "high-density suburb" of Harare. Because of my experiences of being immersed in the life and ministry of my host family in their local (Lutheran) church, as well as the many other churches we visited and discussions with my African classmates, I decided to write my thesis on the growth of the independent churches of southern Africa. Thus it was with much anticipation that I prepared to watch James Ault's documentary series, *Africa Christianity Rising*. In recent years there has been a plethora of books and articles describing the explosive growth of the church in Africa, particularly among what are often referred to as "African Independent Churches." But words printed on a page, no matter how descriptive, cannot begin to fully describe the dynamic growth and life of African churches. Thankfully, Ault has provided us with an excellent "book for our eyes and ears."

Ault filled this two-part documentary with stories from Ghana and Zimbabwe. In the series we visit the same church communities over nearly 20 years, beginning in the late 1990s. (An educational edition includes two additional DVDs with numerous resources.) This two-decade story, as well as the diversity of churches visited, is a great strength of this documentary. Ault takes us to churches of various size and denomination, such as, the International Central Gospel Church and a Roman Catholic Church in Ghana, and the Zion Apostolic Church and St James Methodist Church in Zimbabwe—to name a few. In addition, noted African theologians, such as Kwame Bediako and Peter Sarpong (Ghana's former Catholic Archbishop), share their insights

on the distinctive history, theology, and practice of African churches. But most of the people who we meet in Zimbabwe and Ghana are members of the church communities Ault takes us to; and herein is the treasure to be discovered in this documentary. From these people and through their collective stories we learn, as Ault points out, that “Christianity’s explosive growth in Africa depends upon the powerful and inexorable process of believers’ rooting their faith more authentically in their own cultures”—whether “mainline” (missionary) or “African Independent” churches. Each of the churches in this series is deeply and thoughtfully rooted in their local culture.

It should be noted that this documentary is by no means a comprehensive account of Christianity in the countries visited—denominational and theological diversity, community practices, social issues, and so forth—let alone all of sub-Saharan Africa. Yet here again we find a strength of Ault’s work. We have the experience of going deeper into the life of the local churches and some of its members, observing their life together and hearing their personal stories. Consequently, we get a more complete picture of these congregations than would ever be possible in an exhaustive documentary trying to be all-inclusive in its presentation of African Christianity.

I highly recommend this documentary series for mission societies preparing people to serve in Africa, churches and organizations seeking deeper partnerships with African churches, and students in courses on mission studies and global theologies. I look forward to using Ault’s thoughtful work to introduce my students to some of our brothers and sisters in Ghana and Zimbabwe.

Christian–Muslim Dialogue: Perspectives of Four Lebanese Thinkers

By Heidi Hirvonen

Leiden: Brill, 2013. vi, 349 pp., cloth, \$156

Reviewed by: Richard Hibbert

Heidi Hirvonen argues that a detailed study of Muslim–Christian dialogue is essential for helping Muslims and Christians overcome the mutual ignorance and theological condemnation that has too often characterized their interaction. While previous research has tended to concentrate on Western Christians’ views, Hirvonen examines the writings of two Muslim and two Christian Lebanese thinkers.

Hirvonen’s thorough analysis uncovers a broad range of motivations for dialogue and the varying theologies of religion among the four thinkers. These differing motivations include the desire to attain accurate knowledge of the other religion, to enrich one another spiritually, to cooperate practically, and to help the other to convert to their own faith. Among the four there are two inclusivists, one exclusivist, and one pluralist.

One of the most helpful aspects of this book is the framework it provides for thinking about dialogue. First, Hirvonen examines the “grounding for dialogue,” including each thinker’s understanding of the nature of dialogue, its aims and methods and their theology of religion. Second, she explores “doctrinal dimensions,” including each